

The Mercury News

The Newspaper of Silicon Valley
MercuryNews.com

Pizarro: Big gala focuses on private parts

By Sal Pizarro
Mercury News
San Jose Mercury News

Article Launched:03/26/2007 01:41:42 AM PDT

There was quite a mix of personalities at one Silicon Valley gala Saturday night. But amid the top hats, tuxedos and sparkling accessories, there was the issue of the butt sniffing.

But what else could you expect at the Humane Society of Silicon Valley's fourth annual Fur Ball, where the 250 human guests were overshadowed by the dozens of dogs they brought to "whine and dine" at Santana Row.

Among the notables walking the red carpet were **Chip**, a Yorkshire terrier who emceed the event along with his companions, NBC 11's **Brent Cannon** and **Laura Garcia-Cannon**; **Kohl**, a very regal Great Dane who stood paws and tails above the other dogs; and **Francis**, a golden French bulldog wearing a red bow.

Zeke, a golden retriever, paraded through the tent across from Crate and Barrel and helped raise \$80,000 during the live auction for the Zeke Fund. The fund helps animals who come to the Humane Society in need of serious medical attention, as Zeke did before making a full recovery.

This was the first year guests were invited to bring their pets along, and Humane Society President **Christine Benninger** said it was a great way for partygoers to stay connected to their animals while sipping wine and enjoying a range of buffet items from Santana Row restaurants.

The pets got VIP treatment, too, with "pet valets" on hand to take them to the dog park adjacent to the party tent and servers walking through the party with trays of doggy treats.

Supporters also got to preview the Humane Society's new facility in Milpitas - which will be less of a "pound" and more of an "animal center," with a dog park, cafe and educational exhibits. The groundbreaking is planned for late summer.

Contact Sal Pizarro at spizarro@mercurynews.com or (408) 627-0940 and read him online (www.merccextra.com/blogs/pizarro).